

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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LUTHERAN "MEETING OF DECLARATION TO UNITE" HELD IN KOBE

Headed by Dr. Chitose Kishi, President of the Japan Lutheran Church, representatives of the 10 Lutheran groups in Japan which have consented to merger, met in Kobe from October 22 to 23 for their "Meeting of Declaration to Unite". Observers were also present from the Mo. Synod and the Lutheran Brethern groups which have with-drawn from the merger plans. A total of more than 100 were present at the meeting.

After an informal discussion of the projected merger constitution and by-laws which have received intense study during the nearly 10 years of merger study, the following "declaration" was unanimously approved.

Declaration to Unite

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all". (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Standing on this faith, we believe that we receive the blessed inheritance of the Lutheran Church and that it is God's will that we unite our efforts in proclaiming the Gospel. Based on this faith, the merger of the several Lutheran Churches in Japan has been realized in both spirit and organization through the many negotiations carried out since 1953. Therefore, we continue, having as our object the holding of the Constituting Convention on Reformation Day, 1962. In order to carry to perfection our aims we continue in earnest prayer. Also, we wish to have all churches which are one in faith and desires with us to join us. We are deeply grateful, mindful of the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit during the course of merger discussions and proclaim this declaration to all to the glory of God.

October 31, 1961

"Lutheran Bodies Meeting of Declaration to Unite"

RISSHO KOSEI KAI "TEACHERS" VISIT CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

On the 22nd of October about 200 men and women "teachers of the Rissho Kosei Kai", who had come to Tokyo for their annual All-Japan "Teachers Conference", made an observation tour of several Christian churches and schools in Tokyo.

The Rissho Kosei Kai was founded in 1938 with thirty members and now its adherents have increased to about 340,000 households. Jokai Kamomiya, an official of Rissho Kosei Kai in charge of Doctrinal Affairs, states, in an article in "Contemporary Religions in Japan", that they believe the Buddha Shakamuni and the Christian God to be one and the same. He also likens Christ to Shakamuni claiming that they are both humans sent by the Eternal Buddha, or God, to save mankind. Kamomiya says that Chapter 16 of the Lotus Sutra and Chapters 12 and 15 of St. John's Gospel explain this position. Also, the members of Rissho Kosei Kai wish to join hands, for the sake of world peace, with good religions which do not rely on magic means to solve the sufferings present in our environment or among ourselves-this being the task of religions. Kamomiya says that their belief is that "These are not to be found in Islam nor in established Buddhist sects in Japan, but Christianity alone."

At Yodobashi Church, the last institution visited by the group, the pastor of the church, Rev. Obara and Dr. Zenta Watanabe, well-known Christian theologian, answered questions of the group and presented 50 New Testaments to those requesting it.

KYODAN'S BASIC POLICY ON MISSION DETERMINED

The United Church of Christ in Japan's Second Study Conference on the Basic Policy of the Mission of the Church met from October 23 to 25 at Yugawara. Approximately 100 leaders from all over Japan worked out a basic policy on witness after intensive and careful deliberation on the various opinions suggested by the

many preparatory study conferences. The Executive Committee met immediately following the conference and approved the newly established basic theory putting it into effect on that day.

THE KYODAN'S BASIC POLICY OF MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we face the second century of evangelism with hope for a church which assumes a posture of responsibility of mission to all men.

As we serve Christ, we have resolved to render service to the world, to be mindful that our everyday life is also a place of witness, and to be mutually responsible to the masses. Recognizing that, more than anything else, a renewal of the vital nature of the church is necessary, we wish to advance the following basic policy and at the same time to strengthen the solidarity and unity of our merger church.

- 1) (Basis) Based firmly on Biblical truth, we work for the establishment of a new basic theory of mission as we confront a rapidly changing era.
- 2) (Church) We present our whole life to God, striving for a greater richness in our prayers and worship.
- 3) (Ministry) An understanding of the ministry should be determined which will be able to cope with the present day. The training and instruction of the ministry should be enriched and greater effort given to both the selection of places of labor and to appointments.
- 4) (Laity) The position of the laity should be established and clarified as one in which they live a life of active witness in society.
- 5) (Evangelism) Carry out systematic evangelism according to the Dendo Ken (Larger Parish) plan.
- 6) (Cooperation) Improve cooperative witness activities with Christian organizations within Japan and promote closer liaison with churches overseas.
- 7) (Research and Publicity) Establish research institutes on Kyodan and Kyoku (District) levels and provide centers for reference materials to facilitate the study and analyzation of the situation in which the Church finds itself. Circulate widely the results of these studies.
- 8) (Organization) Strengthen the offices of Kyodan Moderator, Kyoku Chairmen and Secretaries of the various committees, so that they may be able to carry out their respective responsibilities.

SEIBUNSHA - TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A celebration commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the SEIBUNSHA, publishing and bookstore organization of the Lutheran churches and mission bodies in Japan, was held in Tokyo at the SEIBUNSHA headquarters on October 20.

The celebration was presided over by Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and vice-chairman of the Board of Directors of SEIBUNSHA. Lectures were given by

Professor Kazuo Kitamori, professor of Systematic Theology at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, and Professor Ken Ishihara, professor of Church History at Aoyama University. Professor Kitamori spoke on Dr. Shigehiko Sato, the first Japanese Luther scholar, and Professor Ishihara spoke concerning the significance of Luther's Works for the Christian Church in Japan. Greetings were heard from the Rev. Kenneth J. Dale, chairman of the Board of Directors of SEIBUNSHA; Mr. Tomio Muto, president of Kyobunkan; Mrs. Hanako Muraoka, well-known Christian writer; Mr. Anders Hoaas, representing the All Lutheran Free Conference; the Rev. Howard Huff, general secretary of the NCC Literature Commission and Mr. Tetsu Kohmuto, president of the Protestant Publishing Company.

The SEIBUNSHA, at this celebration, announced the forthcoming publication of the first twelve volume section of a planned thirty-six volume edition of Luther's Works in the Japanese language. The first volume is scheduled for publication in the Spring of 1962. This first twelve volume section will contain the Reformation writings (Schriften) of Luther. The second and third sections, twelve volumes each, will contain exegetical works and sermons by Luther.

Also announced was the publication of two new volumes of Luther Studies. The first, The Fundamental Thought of Luther According to His Commentary on Romans, by the late Dr. Shigehiko Sato, is a revised edition of an earlier work issued in 1933. The second, The Theological Thought of Luther According to His Commentary on Hebrews, by Dr. Chitose Kishi, is a new publication.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO BE USED FOR FORMOSAN LEPER WORK

Having presented the offerings taken during Christian Education Week to the Christian Medical Workers' League which is sending medical workers and supplies to South East Asian Countries, an appeal is now being made by the Education Committee of the Kyodan for a Christmas offering to be presented to the Overseas Evangelism Committee of the Kyodan to enable it to send more aid to lepers in Formosa. Last year Dr. Kazuo Hayakawa, who had served as a medical official at a large leproserium in Japan, was sent to set up a hospital for lepers in Formosa. According to Dr. Hayakawa, there are only 12 beds available and at least 50 are necessary to meet minimal needs.

BIBLES TO INDONESIA

Ten thousand New Testaments, printed in the Malayan language, will be completed by the 15th of this month and loaded aboard a freighter for shipment to Indonesia by the 20th.

Early this summer the request for Bibles came from the Bible Society of Indonesia as the unsettled political situation in Indonesia made the import of Bibles from the Netherlands virtually impossible.

Negotiations are also continuing to send from 250,000 to 500,000 Scriptures to Indonesia as part of the World War II

reparations which Japan has yet to settle with Indonesia.

THURBER APPOINTED NCC ASSOCIATE SECRETARY

Rev. L. N. Thurber, missionary of the IBC sent out by the United Presbyterian Church, USA, has been appointed to serve as Associate Secretary of NCC. He first arrived in Japan in 1948 where his principal assignment has been in student work serving as Fraternal Secretary of the Youth Commission of the United Church of Christ, of the Student Department of the National YMCA and of the Life and Mission of the Church Committee. He is also chairman of the Board of Trustees of Canadian Academy. A graduate of the College and Divinity Schools of Yale University, he has also done graduate work at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

